

Application Summary

Application: FY26 DMO Plan - Glendive Chamber of Commerce and Agriculture

Applicant: Glendive Chamber of Commerce and Agriculture

Funding opportunity: FY26 DMO Plan

Application Responses

Organization Name: Glendive Chamber of Commerce - Conservation and Visitors Bureau

First Name: Tacee

Last Name: DeSaye

Street Address 1: 808 N MERRILL AVE

Street Address 2:

City: GLENDIVE

State: MT

Zip: 59330-1835

Funding Opportunity: FY26 DMO Plan

Amount Requested: 30,372

TAC Approved Budget: 30,372

General Description Information

1. Describe your destination (who you are, who you wish to attract and why would they come) addressing your strengths, opportunities, and potential challenges.:

1a. Destination:

Glendive, Montana is a vibrant rural community steeped in history and surrounded by breathtaking landscapes. Established in 1881 with the arrival of the Northern Pacific Railway, Glendive's roots run even deeper—shaped by prehistoric eras still visible in the rugged caprock formations of Makoshika State Park. As Montana's largest state park, Makoshika draws visitors with its striking geologic formations, dinosaur fossils, scenic hiking trails, and panoramic views. Just across town, the Yellowstone River winds through the valley, offering anglers, photographers, campers, and paddlers the chance to experience one of the last free-flowing rivers in the lower 48 states. Each spring, paddlefish season attracts fishermen from across the country eager for the rare opportunity to snag one of these ancient fish.

Glendive continues to grow as a destination for outdoor recreation, with the Short Pines OHV area providing 2,800 acres of off-roading trails and an abundance of camping options that appeal to families, adventurers, and nature seekers alike. The town offers a welcoming blend of modern amenities, walkable shopping and dining, locally made art, historic architecture, and cultural attractions. Visitors can explore both the Frontier Gateway Museum and the Glendive Dinosaur and Fossil Museum, discover public art along bronze sculpture and mural trails, and attend seasonal events that bring the community together.

We are also proud to offer one-of-a-kind experiences that set Glendive apart. Baisch's Dinosaur Digs allows visitors to step directly into the past by participating in real fossil excavations guided by local experts. Yellowstone River Adventures, run by a husband-and-wife team, provides guided river tours, kayaking trips, and opportunities to hunt for Montana agates—offering a personalized way to explore the area's natural beauty. Glendive also holds two stops on the Montana Dinosaur Trail and is a featured destination on the Montana Trail to the Stars.

As we look toward the future, Glendive's strengths lie in its rare combination of natural beauty, paleontology-based tourism, and small-town hospitality. Our opportunities include increasing awareness of our year-round offerings, attracting more off-season travelers, and expanding our regional presence through collaborative partnerships. Ongoing challenges include limited lodging capacity during peak seasons, the perception of being remote, unpredictable weather, and the realities of marketing with a modest budget. Even so, Glendive remains a place of discovery, adventure, and connection—a destination where the past and present meet under the wide-open Montana sky. **According to ITRR's 2024 Glendive Nonresident Visitor Report, 63% of surveyed visitors indicated that Makoshika State Park was their primary reason for visiting Glendive, validating our focus on paleontology and natural landscapes as key marketing themes (ITRR, 2024).**

1b. Strengths:

Glendive is uniquely positioned where rugged badlands meet open prairie, with the winding Yellowstone River creating a scenic and serene backdrop. Our landscape offers visitors an authentic taste of Eastern Montana, with wide-open skies, abundant wildlife, and some of the most stunning, unobstructed sunrises and sunsets in the region. Makoshika State Park and the surrounding terrain provide both adventure and beauty, making Glendive a natural choice for those seeking outdoor exploration, paleontological discovery, and time to unwind.

Our community is known for its hospitality, small-town charm, and deep historic and prehistoric roots. Glendive has been consistently recognized as one of Montana's safest cities, making it especially appealing to families, solo travelers, and anyone looking for a peaceful and welcoming destination. Glendive's strategic location along Interstate 90 makes it a natural entry point into Montana for travelers coming from the east. For many, Glendive serves as a convenient and worthwhile stop on the way to national destinations like Yellowstone, Glacier, and the Black Hills—yet it continues to stand out as a destination in its own right.

Locally owned restaurants, coffee shops, and shops contribute to the town's character and offer visitors an opportunity to enjoy authentic local restaurants and one-of-a-kind experiences. With a strong sense of community pride, remarkable natural assets, and increasing visibility through regional tourism initiatives, Glendive continues to grow as a must-stop destination in Southeast Montana.

1c. Opportunities:

Makoshika State Park continues to be Glendive's biggest visitor draw, with annual visitation exceeding 100,000 visitors in FY25—a 12% increase over the previous year. As Montana's largest state park, it features miles of hiking trails, two disc golf courses, archery range, fascinating rock formations that change color with the lighting of the day, and guided programs such as full moon hikes and stargazing. Camping is a standout experience thanks to wide open skies and zero light pollution—there's nothing quite like seeing the stars from Makoshika. A brand new yurt has quickly become a highlight, joining the park's other unique lodging options like a large teepee and a covered sheep wagon. The Makoshika Amphitheater also adds value as a venue for weddings, yoga, theater, and special events from spring through fall. We are excited about the upcoming park expansion project slated to begin next year, which will bring even more opportunities for recreation and visitor engagement.

The Yellowstone River is another gem in our area, offering kayaking, boating, camping, fishing, and rock picking. There are a variety of boating options including kayaking, jetboating, and rafting that showcase the natural beauty and wildlife along the river. We host two annual fishing tournaments that draw a steady crowd: the Catfish Tournament in May and the Yellowstone River Poker Run in summer. While paddlefish numbers have declined over the years, the paddlefishing season still attracts enthusiasts from across the country hoping to land a prehistoric catch. Hollecker Lake, located just a mile north of town, is perfect for paddleboarding, swimming, sunbathing, and picnicking in a no-motor, tranquil setting.

Our downtown offers a charming shopping experience with locally owned shops, boutiques, and a regional favorite thrift store. Local murals—many of which are created by our high school art teacher and her advanced art students—add color and character throughout town. Three additional murals are planned for the summer. The Bell Street Bridge, illuminated each night in different colors, continues to be a favorite photo spot and gathering place. Visitors can also enjoy a wide selection of locally owned restaurants and seasonal food trucks, each offering their own unique flavors and hometown hospitality.

For history buffs, the Frontier Gateway Museum offers a deep dive into Glendive's past—from dinosaurs to cowboys—with extensive indoor and outdoor exhibits. Nearby, the Glendive Dinosaur and Fossil Museum features 24 full-size fossil displays, plus guided half-day fossil dig experiences. Exhibits are presented in context with Biblical history, offering a unique perspective.

Adventurers can head just seven miles south to Short Pines OHV for over 2,800 acres of open trails and primitive camping. Open year-round, this is a popular spot for off-road riders and outdoor enthusiasts alike.

Agritourism holds tremendous potential for our region. While still in its early stages here, several local families have exciting agritourism projects currently in development. We are staying in touch with these groups and plan to help promote, advertise, and support them as they launch. We're eager to see this sector grow and offer new experiences for both visitors and the local economy.

We feel incredibly grateful to have received RAP funding to help market Glendive as a tourism destination. In addition, our community was selected as a recipient of the Pilot Tourism Grant—a \$2.75 million investment that will enhance local infrastructure and create lasting tourism assets. With these resources and the community's ongoing creativity and collaboration, Glendive's future as a vibrant travel destination

is full of promise.

1d. Potential Challenges:

While Glendive sits directly on Interstate 94, ITRR data shows that only a small fraction of the 2.2 million vehicles passing through each year stop for more than fuel or rest—illustrating our biggest opportunity: giving travelers compelling reasons to stay longer and spend locally (ITRR, 2023 Glendive Corridor Study). Additionally, Montana's average length of stay is 4.2 nights, but for Eastern Montana, it drops below 2 nights (ITRR, 2023). Expanding lodging and camping options, improving seasonal accessibility, and developing year-round itineraries could help close this gap.

Turning pass-through traffic into overnight stays and longer visits is a priority. We know the assets are here—from natural beauty and outdoor recreation to museums, shops, and restaurants—but increasing awareness and giving travelers a reason to pull off the interstate remains a hurdle we're working hard to overcome.

Our primary concern lies in the shortage of camping sites within our region. Even Makoshika, Montana's largest state park, lacks enough campsites to accommodate the growing number of visitors, and it falls short on amenities that modern travelers—especially those with young children—have come to expect. That said, Makoshika continues to offer a truly authentic rustic camping experience with breathtaking vistas and easy access. We see this gap in camping infrastructure as an opportunity for local businesses to step in and fill the need. We're also committed to working with park authorities and local economic development partners to address this shortage and create more options for visitors. Luckily, with the upcoming potential expansion of Makoshika State Park, we are excited that more campsites will be available in the future to better serve our guests.

Another ongoing challenge is that our museums are primarily staffed by volunteers and are unable to stay open during the shoulder seasons. We're seeing a growing demographic of “beat the crowd” travelers arriving in late April and well into October, but without consistent hours during these times, we risk missing valuable opportunities to welcome and educate visitors.

Despite these challenges, we remain hopeful and committed to finding creative solutions that help our community grow and thrive.

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2. Briefly describe how your destination aligns with the Montana brand or describe the Brand strategy for your DMO.:

Glendive strongly reflects the spirit of the Montana Brand by celebrating our wide-open spaces, authentic experiences, and connection to the land. Our destination offers a genuine slice of Montana—unspoiled landscapes, rich history, and a deep appreciation for responsible recreation. From the striking badlands of Makoshika State Park to the banks of the

Yellowstone River, visitors are immersed in the natural beauty and rugged charm that defines our state.

Our DMO strategy centers on highlighting what makes Glendive unique while aligning with Montana's statewide identity of adventure, authenticity, and hospitality. Makoshika State Park showcases nearly 20 miles of scenic trails perfect for day hikes, camping under the stars, and stargazing in skies untouched by light pollution. Historically, we've been known as the Paddlefish Capital of the World, and our river-based activities—like fishing, kayaking, and agate hunting—resonate with Montana's target market of outdoor enthusiasts.

As we continue to develop tourism assets and share our story, we remain committed to protecting the character of our community while inviting others to experience a destination that truly embodies the Montana lifestyle.

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Destination Marketing: ☒

Destination Management: ☐

Destination Stewardship: ☐

Destination Development: ☒

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3a. Define your audience(s) (demographic, geographic and psycho-graphic):

Our marketing efforts are tailored to four key audience segments, each of which is drawn to Glendive for distinct reasons. We focus on understanding their demographic, geographic, and psychographic traits to deliver relevant, engaging, and effective messaging.

1. Outdoor Enthusiasts

Demographic: Adults ages 25–55, including both men and women who enjoy activities such as hunting, fishing, camping, hiking, off-roading, and rockhounding.

Geographic: Minneapolis, MN; Fargo, ND; Bismarck, ND; Rapid City, SD; Missoula, MT; Bozeman, MT (Zaritco)

Psychographic: Independent, adventure-seeking travelers who value public lands, solitude, and authentic rural experiences.

Relevance to Glendive: Makoshika State Park, the Yellowstone River, Short Pines OHV area, and abundant public lands make Glendive a natural base for outdoor recreation. Paddlefishing, upland bird hunting, and agate hunting are unique seasonal draws that help extend visitation beyond summer.

2. Family Travelers

Demographic: Parents aged 30–50 traveling with children ages 4–17, typically middle-income households.

Geographic: Primarily Montana and neighboring states, within a 4–6 hour drive radius.

Psychographic: Families seeking screen-free, budget-friendly, and educational travel experiences. Many plan trips around state parks, museums, or themed adventures that appeal to children.

Relevance to Glendive: Families are drawn to our dinosaur digs, museums, splash park, trails, and stargazing—all accessible and affordable. The visitor center at Makoshika, museums, and wide-open landscapes make Glendive a stress-free and enriching destination.

3. Pit Stop Travelers & Regional Visitors

Demographic: Adults ages 25–65+, including solo road trippers, business travelers, couples, and small groups of friends.

Geographic: Primarily travelers along I-94 or U.S. Route 16, often from Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Minnesota.

Psychographic: Curious, flexible travelers who enjoy discovering off-the-beaten-path places. They're inspired by roadside charm, history, and scenic beauty, often using Glendive as a "rest stop" that turns into a memorable side trip.

Relevance to Glendive: With Makoshika State Park welcoming over 100,000 visitors annually, many travelers discover Glendive by chance and return for its hospitality and attractions. Our goal is to convert short stops into overnight stays.

4. Retired & Older Travelers

Demographic: Adults aged 60+, often retired or semi-retired, traveling with spouses, friends, or RV networks.

Geographic: Nationwide, with a strong presence from northern states during spring/summer and

southern states during shoulder seasons.

Psychographic: Leisure-focused explorers who prefer a slower travel pace. They value comfort, safety, accessibility, and rich cultural or historical experiences. Many follow scenic byways or seasonal migration routes.

Relevance to Glendive: Our peaceful setting, walkable downtown, museums, scenic views, and local history make Glendive ideal for RVers and older travelers. We offer the kind of quiet discovery and connection to nature they seek.

3b. What research supports your DMO strategy? :

Our DMO strategy is data-driven and informed by a variety of reliable sources that provide insights into visitor demographics, behavior, and travel trends. This research allows us to better tailor our marketing efforts and visitor experience strategies for maximum impact, particularly as we focus on emerging markets and experience-based travel.

Zartico Visitor Intelligence

Zartico provides precise tracking of visitor origin markets and behavior. Key findings from FY25 include:

Primary visitor origins: Minneapolis, MN; Fargo, ND; Bismarck, ND; Rapid City, SD; Missoula, MT; Bozeman, MT

Data supports the rise in regional drive markets and short-stay visits, aligning with our focus on curated, experience-based itineraries through our “Plan Your Trip” feature.

Institute for Tourism and Recreation Research (ITRR)

ITRR’s statewide travel data reinforces our findings, identifying Minnesota, Utah, and North Dakota as top residence states for visitors to Montana. This consistency helps us prioritize targeted outreach in these areas.

Makoshika State Park Visitation Data

As a cornerstone of our local tourism offerings, Makoshika State Park experienced a 12% increase in visitation during FY25, surpassing 100,000 annual visitors. These numbers validate our strategy to promote the park as a key driver of tourism in Glendive.

Lodging Tax Collections

While Dawson County experienced a 5% decrease in lodging tax revenue for FY25, statewide

collections reported by the Montana Department of Revenue rose by 4% in Calendar Year 2024. This contrast suggests opportunities for improvement and emphasizes the importance of competitive marketing efforts to boost overnight stays locally.

Together, these data sources guide our efforts to attract experience-seeking travelers, support rural tourism growth, and increase economic impact in Glendive through strategic and informed decision-making.

3c. What are your emerging markets?:

Several markets show exciting potential for growth:

ATV/OHV Recreation:

Short Pines OHV area, with nearly 3,000 acres of public land, is seeing consistent increases in use since the installation of a visitor counter in 2020. This points to a growing demand for wide-open trails and rugged terrain among off-road enthusiasts.

Experience-Based Travel:

One of our most promising emerging markets is experience-based travel, as today's visitors are increasingly seeking authentic, curated experiences rather than traditional sightseeing alone. To meet this demand, we have already developed and incorporated a robust **"Plan Your Trip"** section on our website. This feature highlights the many experience-based activities available in Glendive—ranging from hiking in Makoshika State Park and exploring the Yellowstone River, to visiting local museums, enjoying regional cuisine, and discovering Glendive's art and heritage.

Agritourism:

New agritourism projects are being developed by local families. Our DMO is maintaining open communication with these families and stands ready to assist with promotion, marketing, and collaborative planning as their projects launch. Once open to the public, these agritourism experiences will be featured in our "Plan Your Trip" section and included in themed itineraries—giving visitors the chance to connect with our community's agricultural roots while supporting local families and diversifying the tourism economy. We see agritourism as a meaningful way to showcase our values of hospitality, hard work, and connection to the land.

Shoulder Season Travel:

Fall travel is on the rise. Zartico data and park visitation metrics show increased activity in September and October. We're encouraging local attractions to stay open longer to meet this demand and continue promoting fall hunting, scenic drives, and cool-weather recreation.

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4a. Describe proposed tactics and projects as related to overall goals and controlled by the organization in its financial statements.:

Objective 1: Increase website views by enhancing SEO and improving online visibility.

Measurable Metric: Increase website visits by 5% over FY25 using website analytics.

Tactics & Projects:

Continued updates and improvements to the Discover Glendive website, optimizing for SEO and enhancing user experience.

Deployment of A-frame signs at events with QR codes linking directly to the website.

Ongoing promotion of the Discover Glendive site through all digital campaigns, social media posts, and printed materials.

Table tents in local restaurants with QR codes driving visitors to the event calendar and things-to-do page

International updates to our business and event listings on the **Visit Southeast Montana** and **Visit Montana** websites. This not only boosts Glendive's online presence across multiple platforms, but also drives more qualified traffic to DiscoverGlendive.com and increases potential visitation.

Objective 2: Encourage off-season travel through strategic promotion.

Measurable Metric: Promote at least four off-season events.

Tactics & Projects:

Promote fall and shoulder-season events

Support for off-season sports tournaments through branded materials and digital promotion.

Upcoming billboard refresh and brochure reprints scheduled to include off-season messaging.

Collaboration with local museums and attractions to remain open later in the year based on Zartico visitation trends.

Objective 3: Expand the reach of the "Glendive 5" campaign to increase awareness of our five key attractions.

Measurable Metric: 1% Growth in Overall Visitation and Engagement

Tactics & Projects:

With the support of our RAP grant, Windfall—the agency of record for our DMO—is leading a comprehensive “Glendive 5” marketing campaign. This includes targeted efforts across digital, social media, print, and billboard platforms, all focused on the five core experiences that define our tourism brand: Makoshika State Park, the Yellowstone River, Short Pines OHV, Dinosaur Digs, and Local Museums & History.

On the local level, we are expanding this campaign under the theme “Sell Glendive to Glendive.” Our goal is to educate our residents and business owners on the importance of tourism to the local economy while giving them an inside look at the campaigns being used to attract visitors. By aligning the community with our external messaging, we hope to cultivate local pride, strengthen word-of-mouth promotion, and build a more welcoming environment for tourists.

We plan to use local events as opportunities to showcase our marketing efforts—offering sneak peeks at creative assets, sharing campaign performance insights, and equipping locals with tools to become ambassadors for the Glendive 5.

The "Glendive 5" campaign integrated across window displays, brochures, digital content, sandwich boards at events, and social media.

Brochures and rack cards distributed locally and regionally to drive awareness and visitation.

Highlighted Glendive 5 on large A-frame signs and posters at all major events.

Create a comprehensive visitor map connecting the five attractions for easier exploration.

Objective 4: Increase digital assets for advertising with a professional photoshoot.

Measurable Metric: Receive at least 100 usable digital images.

Tactics & Projects:

Scheduled DMO-organized photoshoot in 2025 to capture seasonal imagery and highlight key attractions.

Use of images across all marketing platforms: social, digital, print, and event signage.

Incorporating new photography into website updates and regional advertising campaigns.

Planning for additional assets to support future map design, rack cards, and experiential content.

4b. How will the addition of LFST funds enhance your overall goals?:

With the additional funds allocated to our Discover Glendive DMO from the state lodging tax, we

will expand our printed visitor engagement materials in a measurable way. Specifically, we will:

Print additional city maps that include local attractions, event highlights, and a QR code linking to our website for up-to-date information.

Design table tents for lodging, restaurants, and visitor centers that feature upcoming events and our Discover Glendive branding, along with a unique QR code.

Create window clings for Chamber member businesses to proudly display in their storefronts. These will include our logo, website, and a QR code directing people to the Discover Glendive site.

Each printed material will have its own trackable QR code, allowing us to monitor usage and gather insights about what formats drive the most visitor engagement. This data will directly inform future marketing decisions and help us prioritize tactics with the strongest return on investment.

5. Define and describe your overall objectives. Objectives are formed from your goals. They are logical, attainable steps to achieve the goals and are able to be measured.:

Objectives/Metrics/Evaluation:

OBJECTIVES	MEASURABLE METRICS FOR SUCCESS	REPORT THE METRIC ACHIEVED	EVALUATION OF SUCCESSFUL METRICS
Increase website views by enhancing SEO and improving online visibility.	Increase website visits by 5% over FY25 using website analytics.		
Encourage off season travel by placing strategic advertisements for the unique events that occur during the off season.	We will promote at least 4 off season events. Use Zartico to track visitation during those times.		
Expand the reach of the “Glendive 5” Campaign to increase awareness of Glendive’s five key attractions—Makoshika State Park, the Yellowstone River, Short Pines OHV Area, Dinosaur Digs, and local museums/history/art.	We want to see 1% growth in overall visitation and engagement of these 5 key highlights through website clicks on the Plan Your Trip page of our website, page views and time spent on itineraries, visitor walk-ins, Makoshika State Park visitation, OHV visitation numbers, and Museum numbers.		
To increase digital assets for advertising with a photoshoot.	We would be successful if we completed and received at least 50 digital images from a DMO-		

	organized photoshoot.		

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Budget Form: FY 26DMO-Budget-Form-LST-LFUT.xlsx

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DMO Budget:

DMO

Allowable Method	Budget	% Budgeted	Amend +/-	Updated Budget	% Budgeted
Lodging Facility USE Tax (LFUT) Budget					
Administration	\$6,074.40	20.00%		\$6,074.40	100.00%
Earned Media/Tourism Sales	\$1,000.00	3.29%		\$1,000.00	3.29%
Education/Outreach	\$2,500.00	8.23%		\$2,500.00	8.23%
Paid Media	\$9,797.60	32.26%		\$9,797.60	32.26%
Opportunity Marketing	\$500.00	1.65%		\$500.00	1.65%
Visitor Services	\$500.00	1.65%		\$500.00	1.65%
Website Development (Online, Website, Mobile)	\$1,000.00	3.29%		\$1,000.00	3.29%
Travel/Trade Shows	\$500.00	1.65%		\$500.00	1.65%
Cooperative Marketing	\$500.00	1.65%		\$500.00	1.65%
Marketing Personnel	\$6,000.00	19.76%		\$6,000.00	19.76%
Joint Ventures	\$1,000.00	3.29%		\$1,000.00	3.29%
Product Development	\$1,000.00	3.29%		\$1,000.00	3.29%
		0.00%		\$0.00	0.00%
		0.00%		\$0.00	0.00%
		0.00%		\$0.00	0.00%
TOTAL LFUT Budget	\$30,372.00	100.00%	\$0.00	\$30,372.00	100.00%

Lodging Facility SALES Tax (LFST) Budget					
Administration	\$388.80	20.00%		\$388.80	100.00%
Visitor Services	\$1,000.00	51.44%		\$1,000.00	51.44%
Paid Media	\$555.20	28.56%		\$555.20	28.56%
		0.00%		\$0.00	0.00%
		0.00%		\$0.00	0.00%
		0.00%		\$0.00	0.00%
		0.00%		\$0.00	0.00%
		0.00%		\$0.00	0.00%

		0.00%		\$0.00	
		0.00%		\$0.00	
TOTAL LFST Budget	\$1,944.00	100.00%	\$0.00	\$1,944.00	

TOTAL LFUT & LFST BUDGET	\$32,316.00	100.00%	\$0.00	\$32,316.00	10
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LFST Revenue Projection	1,944.00
LFUT Revenue Projection	30,372.00
Funds not spent during previous fiscal year	0.00
LFST Rollover Funds at Commerce	0.00
LFUT Rollover Funds at Commerce	0.00
Allocated Following Audit	0.00
Budget total	32,316.00

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The Narrative Evaluation report is used to a) provide a written evaluation of the Objectives and Metrics section and b) provide a written summary of how the LFST Funds were spent and the metric(s) achieved.: